

FUTURE READY

DECEMBER 2022

A newsletter for supporters of Wichita Public Schools College and Career Ready programs



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From the Executive Director

The landscape of post-secondary readiness has changed a great deal since the pandemic. Fewer students are enrolled in college, ACT scores are at a 20-year low, and many employers say how hard it is to find qualified labor.

But every moment of challenge is also a moment of opportunity.



What we are seeing from our students is a more cautious approach to college enrollment. We heard concerns about debt, high tuition, and uncertainty about which career path they would like to pursue. Coinciding with this, we are seeing different opportunities arise, like students finding earn-and-learn models to pay for school, apprenticeship opportunities becoming more popular, and employers leaning into tuition reimbursement programs to attract new talent.

In our office, our goal is help students find their strengths and passions and use those to create a healthy and productive life-style. As our world continues to change and diversify, we too continue to adjust to help students to navigate their future.

But we need the help of everyone in the community to make this happen. Whether it is through donations, work-based learning opportunities, or collaboration about the future, it takes a team effort. During this holiday season, we are thankful for all of our partners who, *with us*, work to create a stronger Wichita community for our future.

Kelly Bielefeld

Executive Director, College and Career Readiness Office

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WPS and WSU Tech Announce New Health Science Future Ready Center



CREDENTIALS STUDENTS CAN EARN AT THE FUTURE READY CENTER FOR HEALTH SCIENCES:

CNA—Certified Nurse Aide

HHa—Home Health Aide

EKG Technician

EMT—Emergency Medical Technician

Phlebotomy Technician

NEW IN SPRING 2023:

Tactical Medicine

Melody Robinson, (L), addresses parents and students interested in the health science programs WPS offers. For several years Robinson, a registered nurse, envisioned a centrally located Health Science Center that would bring together students from all WPS high schools to take courses for high school credit as well as industry certifications.

On October 11, 2022 representatives from WSU Tech, Wichita Public Schools (WPS), Wesley Medical Center, and the Wichita City Council announced the creation of two new Health Science Future Ready Centers. One will be located at the WSU Tech South campus on East Harry; the other will be at Wesley Medical Center. The projects are being funded in part with a \$2.1 million federal grant from the City of Wichita.

With more than a thousand job openings in health care throughout the south central Kansas region, the timing is right for the creation of these centers. Scott Evans, who represented industry partner Wesley Medical Center in his role as Community Engagement Program Manager, addressed the audience attending the news conference. “This is the first time in our area that this collaboration has happened for the healthcare industry. This is going to provide students an opportunity to be inside the hospital, to rub shoulders with healthcare professionals who are in the industry.”

The WSU Tech South Campus center will open with its fully remodeled space in Summer 2023. WPS students are already taking classes there, earning both high school and college credit, as well as important industry credentials that lead to jobs. To WPS teacher Melody Robinson, attending classes on a real college campus is a whole new world for high school students because they *feel* like college students.

The new Health Science Future Ready Center has led to new responsibilities for Robinson, all of them geared toward helping students succeed. During the morning she teaches two Health Science classes at West High. Then she heads to the Health Science Center to teach Medical Terminology and Pharmacology. She also serves as a liaison between WSU Tech and the Wichita Public Schools, dealing with attendance issues, and talking with students and parents. Her role as a bridge between the high school and college programs enhances communication between two distinctly different systems. Most important, Melody Robinson is an advocate for her students, providing the human connection that every good program needs to flourish.

Nearly 200 Students Polish Their Teaching Skills at the Educators Rising Conference

This student is preparing for an impromptu speaking competition at the Educators Rising Conference held on November 9. Educators Rising is one of eight Career and Technical Student Organizations supported by Wichita Public Schools. The organization seeks to provide highly skilled educators who reflect the demographics of their communities and who are passionate about serving those communities through public education.



Nearly 200 students came to the WPS Administrative Building from 14 area high schools to participate in competitions, teach, and learn more about the profession of teaching at the annual Educators Rising South Central Regional Conference and Competitions. The event was hosted by the WPS Office of College and Career Readiness. Participants could choose from 18 learning sessions including “How Not to be as Poor as a Teacher” and “What Does Learning Today Have to Do with Teaching Tomorrow?” Students received scores and feedback from judges, and earned an opportunity to compete at the state conference.



Representatives from area colleges and universities appreciated the opportunity to meet with students and discuss options for earning a college degree in education. WPS offers college students who are education majors the opportunity to work part-time as paraprofessionals for the district while attending school. This provides an opportunity to pay for college while attending school, as well as offering valuable classroom experience.

Students Learn Plant and Animal Science at Southeast High's "Farm"



(L) An animal science student snuggles one of the baby goats being cared for at Southeast High's farm. In the background is some of the equipment used at the goat playground.

(R) Student Nina Baughman proudly displays the project she submitted to the FFA statewide competition at the State Fair last September. "Life Cycles of Corn" earned the Grand Championship.



According to Superintendent Alicia Thompson, very few urban high schools can boast of having their own "farm" where students can learn about plant and animal science.

However, our own Southeast High School does. Headed by teacher Joanna Farmer, students taking courses in the Animal Services and Plant Systems pathways take care of a sheep, goats, a pig, chickens, and rabbits. They learn not only how to feed and care for the animals, but also how to clean and groom them. Animal science students researched a project and worked with manufacturing students to build a "goat playground" to keep baby goats entertained throughout the day.

Students also work in a community garden located on the school campus. Planting begins in the spring and students work in the garden throughout the summer, even though class is not in session. During the fall they harvest the crops. An indoor garden makes the growing cycle last all year long.

Job opportunities in agriculture and related industries abound, providing 10.3% of U.S. employment (Source: USDA Economic Research Service). Many of Southeast's graduates have gone on to earn agricultural degrees and certifications at K-State, Butler Community College, Cowley Community College, and Ft. Hays State. Potential careers include farm worker, veterinary technician, greenhouse or orchard worker, and forestry.

Participation in FFA both complements and reinforces classroom learning. Students recently competed at the Kansas State Fair, with four earning ribbons for their projects. Congratulations to Nina Baughman, who earned the Grand Champion title for her project on the life cycle of corn.

WHAT IS FFA AND HOW DO STUDENTS BENEFIT?

Founded in 1925 by a group of young farmers, FFA stands for "Future Farmers of America."

Its official name is the National FFA Organization. In terms of members it is one of the largest youth organizations in the U.S.

Locally, any public school with an agricultural education program can charter an FFA chapter. Students develop leadership skills through hands-on experiences that include participating in conferences and competitions. The organization welcomes future production farmers, but also veterinarians, chemists, and entrepreneurs.

With 295 student members, Southeast High is the only WPS school with an FFA chapter.

East High Opens F'East Deli To Develop Skills, Raise Funds



Bill Loudermilk stands in front of the new F'East Deli logo. Now that the business is open, his next dream is to have an industry-standard kitchen with permanent space next to it for the deli.

Industry partners gladly assisted with developing the menu and designing the workspace, particularly Tanya's Soup Kitchen and Reverie Roasters. In addition, Loudermilk and his students use local products —bread from Bagatelle Bakery, for example—whenever possible.

Many of the students taking upper-level classes such as Culinary Applications already have jobs in the culinary industry. As part of the WPS College and Career Readiness Program they are able to earn accreditation such as ServSafe certification from the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association.

To Carson McCrory, F'East has given him something to look forward to, along with a goal of owning his own deli. "F'East is why I want to come to school," he said. "I went from having no idea what I wanted from life...now I get to do it almost every day."

A culinary instructor's dream of combining advanced course work with a profitable enterprise to raise funds came true when East High opened F'East Deli on October 25. Currently, F'East is open on Tuesdays during the lunch hour. Students set up the dining tables and tear them down once the deli is closed for the day.

According to student Carson McCrory, students participated in a fundraiser at Bella Vita Bistro that gave them a firsthand look at designing and operating a business. They saw that this was where learning meets real life. F'East gives students in East High's Culinary Applications classes the opportunity to not only create delicious food, but research menus, cost ingredients, and earn a profit.

Bill Loudermilk, the teacher who heads up this project, has several ideas for where the proceeds will go. Some will be used to pay entry and ingredient fees so students can participate in ProStart, a statewide cooking competition.

When Loudermilk dreams, he dreams big. He'd also like to see F'East provide student scholarships and purchase equipment needed for East's Culinary Pathway classes.



Students prepare sandwiches for the deli's grand opening. On the menu were Cuban sandwiches, along with bánh mí and a sandwich called the Elvis. Also on the menu was a lime chicken salad.

“We Build It Better:” Building a Pipeline of Workers for the Manufacturing Industry



Kelly Bielefeld, Executive Director of the WPS Office of College and Career Readiness, addresses representatives from the region’s manufacturing businesses. “Pathway Collaboration Day” brought manufacturers together to share how they can start building a strong pipeline of workers, beginning with students from our area schools.

The WPS Office of College and Career Readiness, together with the Wichita Manufacturers’ Association, helped organize a luncheon to introduce area business representatives to a plan that will build a strong pipeline of future workers. The luncheon was held at the Future Ready Center for Advanced Manufacturing located adjacent to Wichita North High School.

The plan consists of integrating a middle school curriculum that combines manufacturing, engineering, and computer science. “We Build It Better” lays a foundation for students to understand the process of developing a new product and equipping them with the skills to design and create an innovative solution to a real-world industry-based challenge.

Designed by industry and developed by educators, “We Build It Better” engages middle students in a work-like environment emphasizing STEAM—Science, Technology, Engineering, Aviation, and Math. The curriculum is currently being implemented in two WPS middle schools, Brooks and Truesdell.

“We hope to expand our ‘Intro to Manufacturing’ course to six to eight more middle schools next year. The feedback from teachers and kids has been very positive so far,” Bielefeld said.



This student is checking out the tool box that includes industry-grade tools manufactured by Snap-on. Using grant funds, WPS has purchased “We Build It Better” kits for two middle schools. *(Photo courtesy of Flight Works Alabama).*

College and Career Counselors Assist Students with College Applications

Applying for college means filling out forms, answering questions, and making hard decisions. The task may be even more challenging for students who may be the first in their family to plan to attend college.

The Kansas Board of Regents has launched an annual campaign to encourage high schools to host events encouraging students to apply to at least one college or technical school. “Apply Kansas” is a month-long, statewide initiative to increase the number of students applying, enrolling, and succeeding in college or other post-secondary goals, including university, community, or technical college. The initiative also supports students who



Thelma Manley (L) and David Ghitis are two of the WPS College and Career Counselors. Thelma works with students at Southeast High and David assists students at Heights.

EXPLAINING FAFSA (FREE APPLICATION FOR STUDENT AID)

The FAFSA form is required for any student wanting federal financial aid. More than 13 million students who file receive \$120 billion in grants, work-study opportunities, and low-interest loans.

There is no charge to complete or submit the form. It asks for information about family income and finances, including tax returns, so it is critical for parents to assist their student in completing the application.

More information is available at: <https://studentaid.gov>

want to serve in the military or pursue an apprenticeship program. In 2021, 7,818 Kansas seniors attending 159 high schools submitted 11,506 applications through Apply Kansas.

Locally, each WPS high school hosted its own “Apply Kansas” event sometime during the month of October. Heights hosted a “FAFSA Night” where students and parents were encouraged to learn more about applying for financial aid. David Ghitis, the College and Career Counselor at Heights, coordinated the event. “We held our event from 4:00—7:00 in the evening to help students and their parents complete the FAFSA form,” he said. Admissions reps from WSU, WSU Tech, Southwestern College, and Butler Community College were there to promote their courses of study.

To Ghitis, who enjoys assisting students in identifying their interests and abilities, completing the FAFSA form is a critical part of the college application process. Students can send their information to as many as 10 post-secondary institutions.

Apply Kansas is still a relatively new initiative with great growth potential as the Kansas Board of Regents looks to increase the number of participating high schools. It’s another way the WPS Office of College and Career Readiness is working with partners, both inside and outside of the district, to help students achieve their dreams of learning and working after high school graduation.

Photo Gallery



The King of Ghana and his wife paid a special visit to the Advanced Manufacturing Future Ready Center on October 28. L to R: Jon Pine, WSU Tech; PJ Reilly, WPS; Osei Tutu II; Julia Osei Tutu; Chris Coleman, WSU Tech; Tammy Kuipers, WPS; and Ryan Guilliams, WSU Tech.

South High Fire Science teacher Rob Dusenbery (L) and students were invited to join the Wichita Fire Department and other emergency response agencies at the Sedgwick County Zoo's Fifth Grade adventure, where elementary school students could participate in fire prevention and safety activities.



WPS Superintendent Alicia Thompson, Center, poses with North High Health Science students at the announcement of the new Health Science Future Ready Center on October 11. The Center is a partnership between WPS, WSU Tech, Wesley Medical Center, with grant funding from the City of Wichita.

"Future Ready" is published quarterly by the WPS Office of College and Career Readiness.

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